The

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian.

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Notes of the Month.

SINCE our last number appeared the attention of many thoughtful people at home and abroad has been called to a question of international importance. Sentiments first expressed by the President of the United States called forth a response from Sir Edward Gray, the Foreign Secretary, and gained the warm approval of Mr. Balfour. The question thus brought prominently forward and placed outside mere party politics is this : Is it not possible for America and Great Britain to decide all future mutual difficulties, relating to matters of honour, territory, or money, by means of arbitration ? Evidently both President Taft and Sir Edward Grey, in the light of their public utterances, see the possibiltiy of an affirmative answer. But, as the latter pointed out, its ultimate realisation rests with public opinion. Already from the press and from the pulpit there have emanated many earnest endeavours to rouse public interest and enthusiasm. Can we not,as members of a Christian Church zealous for the coming of God's kingdom, do our part to bring about this most desirable consummation ? It would not only be a good thing in itself, but would perhaps be the pioneer of still greater progress in the matter of international goodwill.

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Those of our readers who recently had an opportunity of hearing the Rev. Matthew R. Scott preach or speak in Belfast will have seen with regret that he is likely to go to Canada to carry on propaganda work there. But while we are sorry to lose him from our ministerial ranks in Great Britain we feel that he is just the right man to preach our message eloquently and effectively to the people of Canada. Hence we wish for him the fullest measure of success in his new labours and trust that in consequence our faith will take firm root beyond the Atlantic, and share in the rapid development of the new country.

GOOD THURSDAY.

By Rev. E. L. H. Thomas, B.A.

For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you. St. John xiii. 15.

WE are all sooner or later brought up with a start by such questions as these, What is Life? What is *our* life? What must we do? What must we do to ve with a sense of some satisfaction in iving? or to put it in the brief, scriptural way, What must we do to be saved? As we begin to perceive time swiftly stealing away our years, and as opportunities seem rarer than of old to do anything, and perhaps our spirit is a little broken, and our energies are a little flagging, we begin to wonder what St. Paul meant when he urged us "to buy up the opportunities," and *so*, may be, as they get more precious, to redeem time wasted, buy back lost opportunities or rather, perhaps, we begin to seize his meaning through his warning word, "*Now* is the acceptable time, *now* is the day of salvation." Does any serious person ever fail sometime or other, to be pulled up with a start at the swift passage of time and at what it is doing with our life? What is *your* life? exclaimed the Apostle James, and I am sure many of us would readily give the answer he gave, as he thought of the people whom he was addressing and *their* lives. *Our* life, we should say, ah! we fear our life is what *you*, the apostle, say it is, "it is a vapour." Its chief characteristic seems to be its capacity for quickly vanishing, having been something 'light and unsubstantial.' We are the only beings, as someone once strangely remarked, who know that we shall die. We feel sure no other creatures ever make that reflection. Other creatures go straight on fulfilling their instincts and their destinies untroubled, or shall we say unaided, unstirred, nay, unthrilled by the wonderful mystery implied in the knowledge that we shall die. The other creatures not having to ask what death is, have no need either to ask what life is, nor what a *saved* life is,—a life fulfilling a *divine* purpose by choosing a divine method of living, a life that having craved the divinest thing, Peace, has complied with the conditions that will procure it. No, this questioning and anxiety about life, about how we are living and how we ought to live, is peculiarly our human characteristic mark and distinction. And Jesus taught men that they would be happy, blessed, at peace, if they knew and did the things that made for peace: if ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them. Can we not imagine how earnestly the disciples were asking, in those solemn and tragic days, crowded with events that were to have such wonderful influences upon *them*, and upon all the world for evermore, can we not imagine how earnestly they were asking, what was their life, and what were the things that make for peace? What was the secret of their Master's peace, so different from the peace which the world giveth. The worldly peace is a numbness that comes of apathy and indifference, the peace that is the dull sense of self-sufficiency in the possession of the good things of the world, the peace that is like that referred to when it was said of the Romans that they devastated whole provinces, and having made a solitude called it a peace: yes, the world devastates, lays waste whole provinces of our life and leaves us with a blank sense of defeat and emptiness—a solitude that we mistake for peace. That peace, in some form, assuredly the disciples knew full well, as we all know it—the peace which the world giveth. It was not for that they craved as they looked into the light and joy and peace of their Master's face, as they walked and questioned and contended by his side. Well we all learn best by example, nay, it is the only way, in general, by which we can properly learn anything. Truly is Christianity called a *life*, a life divinely lived, and Christ the great example. Now the thing that seems to have overwhelmed the disciples, and which is so pathetically recorded in the first three gospels, was the spectacle of Christ's

actual self-sacrifice, his readiness to offer himself up a dying sacrifice, at this historically most solemn passover, and in some way, which they failed clearly then to grasp, to sacrifice himself for them, or his friends, on their behalf, and somehow through them for all the world. So the solemn words of the broken bread and broken body, the outpouring of wine and the shedding of blood for them, became an absorbing symbol. It seemed to swallow up, or rather to comprise all other acts of self-sacrifice and lowly services that the Master had given such rich and ample examples of. There is only just an allusion in St. Luke to the greatest being as he that doth serve, and the words are recorded after the last supper,—I am in the midst of you as he that serveth. The wonderful *living* parable (so reminiscent of the method of the older prophets) of the performance of the lowliest domestic service peculiar to Eastern households, the washing by the servant of the feet of the guests, is recorded in the gospel according to St. John alone. It was long before the disciples understood that the central act of Christianity was symbolised there. To the chief disciple, Peter, Jesus pathetically said, knowing how long it would take for all to learn the lesson of service that would bring the kingdom of Heaven amongst men, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt understand hereafter." And St. John again makes no allusion to the bread and wine. No, but he reminds men that somehow they must get into *organic* spiritual connection with Jesus, their life must flow out of his, if they are either to understand the *great* self-sacrifice on the cross, or the *loving* self-sacrifice in the doing of the lowliest service, descending to help as a brother, not condescending to help as one from whom the service could not properly be expected or claimed. It was the perfect brotherhood that was being spiritually connected with the idea of perfect Fatherhood and made plain to the disciples. So St. John reports words of Jesus not about the *wine* but the *vine*: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine so neither can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit, for apart from me ye can do nothing." Yes, these words reveal the great secret of the temporary collapse and despair of the disciples, when they felt for a time after the crucifixion, like lopped-off branches —their life and hope withering and dying, pining for their dear Lord as for the vine stock. But something Jesus had given them they could not lose, and it proved their salvation and ours—his example, his love, his *life* he had given them. They revived, for he lived again in them. They, too, began "the life of self-renouncing love" and worked "the works of lowly love"—and found that he had left them what they craved for, and what he had promised them, his Peace—not as the world giveth. And the way, the truth, the life is no other now and here, than it was then and there in Palestine.

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THE DISSENTERS CHAPELS' BILL, 1844.

By Rev. James Kennedy.

VI.

THE case against Eustace Street came up for trial before Lord Chancellor Sugden who had been counsel against the Unitarians in the Hewley Case in England and who was rather unsympathetic with Unitarians, even going so far as to question whether they were entitled to be called Christians at all. After arguments by counsel he intimated that it was clearly his duty as the law stood to decree in favour of Chisholm and the orthodox. But as the Bill was then before Parliament as the leaders of the Conservative Party to which he belonged had joined with the Whigs to prevent further spoliation, and as an amendment had been carried in the Lords suspending further action against

congregations such as Eustace Street, he postponed the case and announced his intention to deliver judgment on the first day of next law term, which he did, but in the meantime the measure had been carried and had obtained the Royal assent. The "information" was dismissed, but curiously enough to the non-legal mind and very suggestive of the opinion of Mr. Bumble that "the law is a ass," full costs were awarded out of the Charity not to those who had endured the long agony but to the Attorney General and to the Relators, Chisholm and his two brither Scots. If Duncan did not succeed we must award him the merit of sparing no effort to win. Not content with regular proceedings in Chancery he had resort to both threats and cajolery. While the suit was in progress he caused a letter written by himself to be shown to Dr. Ledlie in which *in the interests of the Doctor's family* he advocated submission, pointing out that a decree *against* the congregation (which seemed inevitable) would exclude Dr. Ledlie and his family from every Fund, &c. &c.

Two days after the Chancellor's intimation that as then advised the Unitarians would be stripped of all their church property and funds, even funds founded by donors still living, he communicated with Mrs. Ledlie through a friend, pointing out the dire evils impending, even the deprivation of the Widows' Fund after her husband's death should the latter resist and not come to terms with the prosecutors. But a good wife is from the Lord. In a way that reminds us of the wives of ministers ejected in 1661-2, Mrs. Ledlie stood by her husband, a true help mate, and encouraged him to persevere in the way of integrity and honour though ruin should befall. If any prospect of gain evinced itself Duncan did not confine his gentle attentions to Unitarians. Having formed a little Presbytery by detaching two or three ministers from the Synod of Munster, and instituted creations of his own as ministers where there really were no congregations, men who gave assent to the Westminster Confession *verbally*, but did not sign it, and having deprived the Unitarians of all benefit from the General Fund because they did not believe it, he instituted proceedings in Chancery to deprive Dr. Carlisle of Dublin and other ministers of the General Assembly there of all benefit from the General Fund that he might tempt the new Presbytery he had called into being. And his faithful henchmen, Drs. Cook and Stuart and possibly others supported and encouraged him, but the suit was decidedly adverse to Chisholm who was now evermore on his travels. This new Presbytery which Chisholm had called into existence he designated "The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church" and sought to wrest the General Fund from the subscribing ministers for benefit of the said Church; and as he would have taken care to have the management of it his own interests would not have been overlooked. An amazing man he must have been in his serpent-like magnetic power over the highest government officials as well as over astute divines. Though for years the general public was fully convinced of his rascality, and though the cause of his flight from Inverness was notorious such was his power of mystifying that he was declared by the Lord Lieutenant after some sort of investigation by high officials, to be a public servant of unimpeachable integrity. At a General Assembly held in Belfast in 1849 his assumed name no longer a matter of doubt, and his character publicly commented upon in the Assembly, yet to rehabilitate him in public opinion he was asked by his devoted friends to sit for his portrait and of course complied. Engraved copies thereof, alongside that of Dr. Kirkpatrick, a renegade Rademon man, were exhibited in certain Dublin print shops. Further, though fresh evidence of delinquencies was coming to light every day, those whose schemes, as they thought, he was carrying out, but who were his dupes at the same time, tried still further to restore his shattered reputation by a great public banquet at Dublin, the cost of the tickets of admission to which were largely defrayed by himself. Mr. Macrory, solicitor to

the General Assembly, and solicitor in the various Chancery suits, occupied the chair. Dr. Cook and Mr. Hutchinson, distributors of *Regium Donum*, who both must have been cognizant of certain secrets, connected with surplusages of *Regium Donum*, were present, and representatives of Episcopal and other churches. Nothing could exceed in fulsomeness the adulation poured on the head of the man, whom in their souls they must have known to be a hypocrite and a cheat. With shocking profanity it was plainly set forth in an address that his health had been restored from a severe illness, "and his valuable life spared in response to their prayers." Such and much more to the man who had been held up to public scorn as a hypocrite, and who could not deny having fled from justice from Inverness, and shortly after other peccadilloes came to light and the banquet proved a farewell repast. But he played the hypocrite to the last. On a Wednesday evening he addressed a meeting in the presence of Dr. Kirkpatrick, Moderator of the General Assembly, on "The Duty and Advantages of Prayer." On the Saturday following he was once more a fugitive from justice, and needless to say his picture was soon removed from shop windows in Dublin.

It is feared that Mr. Editor's patience is nearly exhausted with what is rather the biography of a scoundrel than an account of the Dissenters Chapels' Bill, of which more and concluding in next issue. Yet perhaps the recital of these matters as to the deadly peril in which our Meeting-houses and Church property stood through the machinations of a villain, incited by well-known divines and laymen like Macrory, the stress and strain amounting almost to loss of life on the part of men like Dr. Montgomery, may stir our somewhat languid pulses and rouse to a more faithful attachment to our venerable houses of prayer—once so nearly lost—and a more regular attendance at the services there performed on each Lord's Day.

THE GROWTH OF IDEAS.

By W. J. Baxter, B.A.

IT is a dangerous experiment for a layman to "put his sickle into the field of dread Theology," but it sometimes happens that members of our Church are pounced upon and "put through their paces" by those who would fain

> Prove their doctrine orthodox
> By apostolic blows and knocks.

On such occasions the query generally follows one comprehensive, if somewhat crude, formula—"What do you believe?" or, more boldly, "Do you believe anything?"

If the Unitarian victim utters a mild protest and ventures to lure his antagonist from the arid region of theological controversy by a gentle application of the Socratic method, it will generally appear that the disputants are separated by diverse interpretations of the little word "belief." For the one it signifies the acceptance of certain articles or dogmas as the whole and immutable truth, for the other it connotes a mental outlook which recognizes that change and growth are the fundamental conditions of man's thought as they are of the processes going on before our eyes in the external world.

The "Non-Subscriber" not only refuses to accept *ex cathedra* solutions of the mystery of life, but he goes further and cuts away the base on which those solutions rest. He denies that it has been given to any man or body of men to discern the whole truth on any question of religious belief; he refuses that arbitrary dictation which declines to "see life steadily and see it whole," and labels one portion of the world's history "sacred" and another "profane," which would have us attach a Divine sanction to this or that decree of an ecclesiastical council and at the same time denies such sanction to the "thoughts that wander through eternity," bequeathed to mankind by poets

and prophets in every age and in all lands.

We appeal to the teaching of history. We do not ask men to close their eyes to one set of facts and to place a certain construction on another as the only sure guide in "Matters of Faith." We maintain that it is only by a free and fearless exercise of our faculties on "things seen" that we can arrive at any perception of those things which are "unseen and eternal," and we do not exclude from the range of enquiry any source that sheds light on the workings of the human mind. There is, for instance, no question of more intense or abiding interest than that of human personality. We do not base our belief in immortality on the views of Homer, of Vergil, or of Dante. Yet we recognise that their poems represent in a very definite shape several stages in the growth of the idea of immortality. We see how Vergil, as compared with Homer brings it a step nearer to our own conception by what Myers calls "the most important of all speculative changes"—that is, "the transference of the ideal from the visible to the invisible, from the material to the spiritual world." Achilles thus addresses Odysseus in the underworld—I quote from Mackail's translation—

"Speak not soft words concerning death to me
Glorious Odysseus: rather had I be
A thrall upon the acres to a man
Portionless and sunk low in poverty,
Than over all the perished dead below
Hold lordship"—

Turning to the Sixth Book of the Aeneid we find a great advance in the conception—all the speculative and philosophical thought of the interval is fused in that "light among the vanish'd ages." When Aeneas sees the multitude of souls on the shore of Lethe he asks Anchises—

O father, must I deem that souls can pray
Hence to turn backward to the worldly day?
Change for that weight of flesh these forms more fair
For that sun's sheen this paradisal air?

Then follows the passage expository of the Vergilian Theodicy which is too long for quotation here, but a fine translation of it with some remarks on the whole subject will be found in Myers' "Classical Essays."

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For the Children.

SPRINGTIME.

THE days are lengthening. Trees and hedges are putting forth new leaves. The crocus, the daffodil, the primrose, and the violet have come again. Spring is here. In the garden and the fields it is a time of new life; everything is waking up after the long winter sleep and the birds are singing for joy.

Long before Jesus brought his glad tidings to men it was felt that the Spring was a season of rejoicing, "for, lo, the winter is past, the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come." Merry festivals were held because everybody felt the spirit of youth; it was a time of gladness because the cold dark days were gone and the earth was full of promise and beauty. When the religion of Jesus spread these Spring festivals were given a larger meaning; did not Jesus come that men "might have life, and have it more abundantly?" So we have our Easter festival in the spring, and it follows close upon the day we set apart to commemorate his death. One very beautiful lesson this teaches,—the joy of new life, the power to spread around us gladness and sweetness, like the flowers, can only be ours when we have endured the hardships of winter. Sometimes we think that New Year's Day ought to be in the Spring, for it is then that a fresh start seems to be made in nature: but the start was really made months before

and mid-winter is about the right place for the beginning of the year. A wise old writer in the Bible tells us that " It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth." and wise old nature seems to agree that what is good for man is good for the flowers.

Two crocus bulbs woke up one morning and found themselves in a world of darkness and dirt. Said one to the other, " This isn't much of a place to live in, but I feel I am meant for something better, I am going to try to push my way out of this." " Don't talk nonsense," said the other, "what better are we fit for ? we are ugly, we are in the dark, there is heavy hard ground above us which we are not strong enough to break through : and even if we should force our way up, can't you hear the wind blowing, we should be torn to pieces in less than no time. What's the use of trying to be what you're not ? " They had a long argument about it, but neither changed his mind, so the one began pushing upwards ; he sent forth a tender sprout which seemed a ridiculous means of breaking the heavy clods, but he kept at it, and gradually he pushed further and further through till at last he came out into the light. The effort he had made had changed him so that instead of being a dull brown he was the colour of the grass ; you may be sure he was pleased with himself, but he thought he would like to be tall enough to see over the grass all round him and he kept on struggling upward. At first this new world was a constant joy to him, so much more to see than he had been used to under ground, but some days it was very cold and the wind rushed against him for all the world as though it wanted to break him off so that he should not grow any more. But the swaying to and fro strengthened the crocus and the frosty nights hardened him and he refused to be discouraged. This further effort changed him yet more and on the green stem there formed a golden flower like a royal crown to reward his perseverance, till one bright spring morning he heard a child's voice saying, " Come quick, Mother, here is a beautiful crocus, the first flower in our garden to tell us of the coming of Summer." And the crocus felt that all his struggling was well worth while, for he had brought joy to the heart of a child. And the other bulb, Well, he didn't see why he should battle against a cruel fate, he didn't try to move upward, he got to look more and more like the dirt around him till at last you couldn't tell the difference, and I believe he just became dirt.

Long, long ago people learned the lesson taught by the Spring and put it into a story which we have all heard many a time. Cinderella had all the drudgery, her two sisters had all the pleasure, but the fairy god-mother knew that only those who do not shirk hard tasks and dreary duties can be changed into beautiful princesses, and a wave of her wand brought that wonderful coach, the magnificent dress and the glass slippers,—but the magic was in Cinderella's patience, had she not toiled in the kitchen she would never have shone in the ball-room.

That this fairy tale is true all who have read the lives of great men and women know full well. Only by facing difficulties and overcoming them, only by not being afraid of drudgery, can we change ugliness into beauty and win the choicest gifts of the kindest fairy god-mothers. All those who are young and feel young believe in the fairy land where bulbs become flowers and Cinderellas marry princes. I am younger than most of the children who read this page, for I am more than 35 years young, and I know this is true. The rough winds and biting cold of Spring help to make it good as well as gladsome. " Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth ; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes ; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

Here is a rhyme for the young of all ages—

" In this world of froth and bubble
Two things stand like stone ;
Friendship in another's trouble,
Courage in your own."

REPORTS.

Belfast: Domestic Mission.—The annual meeting of the friends and subscribers of the Belfast Domestic Mission was held recently in the Central Hall, Rosemary Street, under the presidency of Dr. John Campbell. The Chairman said it augured well for the future of the Domestic Mission that so many people were interested in it. Miss Bruce submitted the report, which stated that the Missionary, Mr. Woolley, had attended the Missionary Conference in London, and had since been busily engaged in connection with the operations of the Mission. The finances of the society had caused the Committee some uneasiness, the balance at the end of 1910 being only £11 18s. 3d., as against a balance of £38 7s. 1d. in the previous year. Mr. F. Woolley, missionary, said foremost upon their programme stood the Sunday services. These had been attended fairly well, and upwards of twenty new families had come under their influence during the year. The number on the roll of their Sunday-school had shown a slight increase. During the summer their Holiday Fund continued its good work of sending mothers and other needy cases to the seaside for rest and recreation. After referring to the efforts made in connection with the formation of a Social Guild, the speaker gave a detailed account of the Men's Club and various agencies in connection with the society. The Chairman, in moving the adoption of the reports, expressed his satisfaction at the work which had been so quietly and unostentatiously done during the year, and he hoped there would be a ready response to appeals for contributions to the society's funds. Rev. M. R. Scott, in seconding, said he had been greatly interested in the various reports which he had heard read that night. It was beginning to be asserted that the whole social question resolved itself into condition, environment, and circumstance, and if these were altered the question was solved. He thought the Domestic Mission was working on these lines because of the religious element which largely influenced it. It dealt with the matter from the religious point of view, and it was proceeding on the right line to fight the evil of debasing social conditions. Other speakers were Rev. H. J. Rossington, B.D., Mr. Charles M'Kisack, Rev. G. J. Slipper, and Mr. W. H. M'Fadden.

Comber.—The Annual Meeting of the Comber Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Congregation, at which there was an exceptionally large attendance, was held in the Lecture Hall adjoining the Church, on Tuesday evening, the 21st February. After an enjoyable tea the chair was taken by Rev. T. Dunkerley, and the business of the meeting was disposed of in a satisfactory manner. A most inspiring Address, entitled, "The Place of Unitarianism in Modern Life," was given by the Rev. E. Savell-Hicks, of Dublin. Thought-provoking, full of enthusiasm, pleading for tolerance, condemning indifference, his words impressed deeply all who heard them. Songs were delightfully rendered by the following ladies: Mrs. Herbert Andrews, Mrs. E. Savell-Hicks, Miss E. Ferguson, Miss S. Sloan, and Mr. Conkey, after which a most enjoyable evening was brought to a close.

The Monthly Meeting of the Young People's Society in connection with Comber Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Congregation was held on Thursday, the 16th February. The early part of the evening was devoted to games specially arranged for the younger members of the Society, after which a most instructive, highly interesting and amusing paper was given by Mr. Alex. Orr on "Impressions gleaned from Belgium during a recent short visit." Although the paper occupied fully an hour there was not a dull moment, most of the audience realizing for the first time how closely linked we are in many ways with the Continent; how much one country can learn from another; and how true is the teaching that we are children of one great family the wide world over.

Glenarm.—A successful Concert was held here on Friday evening, 17th February, the Rev. J. A. Miskimmin, presiding. There was a good attendance and those present showed their warm appreciation of the interesting programme which had been provided. Choruses were sung by the choir at the beginning of each part. Solos were rendered by Miss M. Barnes, Greyabbey, and Miss Agnes Crawford, a youthful singer from Larne; Messrs. R. Leith, D. M'Neill (Carnalbana), and John Robinson. Miss Barnes also took part with Mr. Leith in several duetts which were enthusiastically received by the audience. Mr. J. H. Donaghy, D.S., Larne, proved that he was an elocutionist of a high order in the recitations with which he favoured the meeting. Messrs. D. Logan, Wm. M'Cullough, Jas. M'Neill, Miss Irvine and Miss M'Neill displayed marked ability in their rendering of the sketch, "Runaway Matches." Mr. James Galbraith delighted the audience by his humorous readings, "Peggy, and hoo I courted her." The pleasure of the evening was much enhanced by selections on the mandoline by Miss M'Vicker, and on the gramophone by Mr. Smith. The accompaniments were efficiently played by Miss Miskimmin and Miss Pullen. Votes of thanks proposed by the Chairman to all who had assisted in the entertainment, and the singing of the National Anthem brought the proceedings to a close.

Larne and Kilwaughter.—On Sunday, 19th February, Rev. W. S. Anderson, Belfast, Secretary and Superintendent of the Ulster Children's Aid Society occupied the pulpit here morning and evening. The congregation was of normal size in the morning, but in the evening many neighbours of different denominations were present. Mr. Anderson

gave full and very interesting explanations of the objects and working of the Society to interested and sympathetic audiences. Special music was rendered by the choir in excellent style, the anthem, " The Voice of Jesus," being particularly appreciated ; Mr. Whelan taking the solo. Mr. E. Holmes presided at the organ with his customary grace and finish. The collections in aid of the Society amounted to nearly £10.

Newry.—A Social evening in connection with the Young People's Guild was held on Tuesday, 7th March, in the School, when the formal opening of the new piano purchased by the Guild was celebrated. Tea was provided and served by the Misses Thompson, Megaw, L. and M. M'Combe, S. Warnock, and Mrs. Slipper. After the tables had been cleared Mrs. Slipper was called upon to preside, and in a brief address spoke of the successful effort that the members had made in procuring an instrument for the Schoolroom. A musical programme was then rendered, contributions being given by Miss Warnock, Miss Thompson, Misses L. M. and I. M'Combe, Mrs. Slipper, Mr. J. P. Bell, Mr. M. Simpson, Mr. Mahood, Mr. John Thompson, and the Rev. G. J. Slipper. A resolution thanking all who had contributed to the evening's enjoyment was passed on the motion of the Rev. G. J. Slipper, seconded by Mr. Walter Scott, and Messrs. J. P. Bell, and John Thompson responded. Thanks were also passed to Mrs. Slipper for presiding and games were then indulged in for an hour when the members separated.

Templepatrick.—The congregation here held its annual business meeting in the Roughfort School, on Thursday evening, the 16th March. The ladies of the congregation supplied tea and a large number of members of the church partook thereof at 7-30 o'clock. After tea the Secretary presented his annual report which showed progress and set forth that as the result of special efforts during the year the adverse balance had been decreased. Subsequently arrangements were made for the Sale of Work to be held on 30th June and 1st July. Mrs. Turner, Templepatrick, will gladly receive, on behalf of the congregation, contributions towards this effort.

On the following evening the ladies of the congregation again assembled and made tea for the scholars of the day and sunday-Schools. There was a very large gathering. The roll of the Sunday-school for last session contained 46 names and showed an average attendance of 36, 24 of whom qualified for prizes ; these were distributed. An interesting programme followed when the Misses Moore and M'Millan sang songs ; the Misses Wilson, M'Alister, M'Keen and Ritchie recited ; and Master J. Kell entertained with his gramophone. Mr. John Reid presented sweets to all the children. The meeting concluded with the benediction.

Unity Guild.—The February Meeting held in the Mountpottinger Schoolroom, on the 15th of that month proved an unqualified success and showed the wisdom of the Committee in allotting a night to the ladies. Three papers were read, and dealing with these in the order in which they were delivered we find that the first was contributed by Miss Florence M. Kennedy who dealt with " Floral Favourites." The essay was a short one, but it was of undeniable quality and one could almost imagine oneself in the sunny days of summer wandering round the garden or hedgerows. Miss Isobel Campbell followed with a short discourse on " Oliver Wendell Holmes," and here we find the results of a careful study of the American writer's life placed before the audience in a concise form bearing the stamp of literary quality. Last but not least (in public opinion at any rate), came Miss M. Robinson who dealt with the modern question of " Woman's Suffrage." Fired with the enthusiasm of a convert to the cause Miss Robinson made out what, to the disinterested or impartial hearer, must have been a very telling argument in her favour. Subsequent discussion showed, however, that her efforts had not done all she might have wished. One thing is certain, however, as a result of the Meeting under review, and that is the Committee have learned how foolish they were not to arrange for one of these meetings in previous years. *Place aux Dames*! They were splendid! The Annual Meeting is fixed for April 19th in Central Hall.

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ECHOES.

While contemplating our own Sustentaiton Fund, at present in process of formation, it is interesting to learn that the Congregational body in Liverpool is making an earnest endeavour to raise during the present year, a sum of £250,000 for the augmentation of its ministers' incomes. The movement has been started by four persons giving in the aggregate £18,000, *i.e.*, on an average £4,500 each. Religion, it is evident, is still a living force, and ministers are not yet a discarded commodity. Forty years ago, the writer was assured by one who believed himself a true prophet, that the days of ministers were numbered, and that in ten years from that time, their occupation would be gone !

* * *

How amazingly ignorant are some people of the common concerns of life—a marriage service, for instance! A curate attended a marriage service in a meeting house, and at the close went to his hostess, the mother of the bride, and said, " Why, it was quite a religious service." That young man deserves our pity. He must have been born in the dark, and also brought up in darkness. But a still more amazing instance was manifested recently by an Episcopal Divine, who was a guest at a nonconformist home. Having accepted an

invitation to join in family worship, he afterwards at the breakfast table expressed his surprise at the mistake he had until that time made, for he had understood that all Nonconformists were Unitarians. *M.A.P.* is responsible for these stories which are not bad, seeing we are living in the twentieth century.

* * *

The thought of getting the Bible translated as we would desire it, may be new to most of us, yet the translator of a recent version declares that he received offers, one of £600, if he would adapt the Old Testament to suit the peculiar tenets of a single congregation; while a religious body in the United States tried to tempt him with a sum of £5,000 if he would so translate the New Testament as to suit its doctrines. Such statements are astonishing. What presumption to think of biassing infallibility! However, we must be careful about throwing stones, for when our present Authorised Version was arranged for, the translators were enjoined by King James the First, to see to it that all ecclesiastical terms should be so rendered as to favour the episcopal form of church government. And James the First was an honourable man.

* * *

In addition to ordinary means of murder by the use of knives, firearms, bombs, and poisons there has been lately added another—by microbe. Where is the work of this gentleman going to stop? He is becoming a terrifying individual, though it appears that while one kind destroys, another preserves life. And the destroyer is now being used instead of the knife, pistol, bomb, or poison, as was shown by the recent murder trial in Russia, when Count O'Brien de Lacy was sentenced to imprisonment for life and his tool, a doctor, for fifteen years. All that has to be done is to give your enemy a decoction of plague, or cholera microbes, and the thing is accomplished. I wonder whether there are any theological microbes abroad, making havoc with otherwise fair-minded and generous natures. I think my old friend Hezekiah Goodenough, would say there are, and very active ones too. And I am inclined to agree with him.

* * *

I have read of London unemployed being so independent as to refuse 3/6 a day for clearing snow from the streets. Rather than accept lower wages than they thought they ought to receive, they declined them, and preferred to remain to swell the mass of "the unemployed." Now, we are told that the Church Army has offered those out of work, food and assistance in obtaining permanent employment, on condition that applicants would render some return for such assistance. In this, there was nothing incompatible with dignity and self-respect. Hundreds, if not thousands, must have seen the appeal and conditions, but sixty only, accepted the offer. Other agencies offered similar benefits, but without any conditions as to service, when 1,500 at once accepted the aid. Is not this latter an example of the wholesale manufacture of paupers?

* * *

A writer in the old-established Roman Catholic paper, *The Tablet*, recently said that the theological struggle in England and elsewhere is rapidly becoming one between Roman Catholic Christianity and Unitarianism. Roman Catholicism is the religion of authority—the church does the thinking for its adherents; while Unitarianism, is the religion of liberty—it leaves its adherents to do their own thinking to the best of their ability. It is well that the two theological forces should be thus brought into sharp contrast. Let readers note that contrast, and endeavour to render themselves secure in their position.

* * *

It is very gratifying to be able to record incidents like the following: At Newchurch, in Lancashire, there are now being held at intervals united gatherings of men belonging to the Unitarian, Wesleyan, Baptist, and United Methodist Churches for purposes of religious instruction. They are held first at one place of worship, and then at another. One was lately addressed by a Unitarian layman on "The Bible." when between 500 and 600 were present. Another event is that of a Unitarian choir at Rochdale, also in Lancashire, giving a concert and entertainment in aid of an effort that was being made by a local Wesleyan Methodist congregation to enclose their burying-ground. Such incidents as these are far-reaching in their influence, and speak volumes in favour of true Christian fellowship.

* * *

While some persons admit that attendance on religious worship has declined, they will not admit that religion itself has declined in its influence over the private and public life of the people. According to public statistics, attendance at religious services is lessening every year, as the following figures show very convincingly:—The Congregational Year Book, records a decrease of 1,587 members, and the Baptist Year Book, a decrease of 3,775. I have not met with those, if any, of the Methodist and Episcopal Churches, though I fear both have to lament leakages. It appears to be the feeling of some writers on this subject, that this "ebbing tide" can only be arrested by discussions on social, political and literary topics, and lantern addresses in place of sermons. Is it possible that such would be an improvement? Solid, practical services, are, apparently at a discount, and sensationalism and amusement at a premium.

* * *

About 44 years since, the United Kingdom was much exercised concerning the amount of its coal supplies, and how long they would last. I forget the length of time scientific

men gave us before the evil day would come, but I believe it was not more than 150 years, and then ——— ? It was taken for granted that all sources were known, and the amounts they would approximately yield. But, fortunately, fresh fields of coal were subsequently discovered in Kent and elsewhere, and the period was extended to 400 years. Since then, however, another new and large field has been reported from the east of England which has put off the evil day still further. So we can go to bed, and joyfully sing as we go, " The sun will shine to-morrow as it has shone to-day," and when the worst comes to us here we can go to China where they are said to have supplies to last the world for 2,000 years. The Chinese themselves are afraid to resort to them lest the legions of devils believed to live deep down in the earth should be let loose and wreak their vengeance upon the people.—W.S.S.

———:o:———

ONE OF MY BEST FRIENDS.

I have a friend with master hand,
And calm commanding eye,
A heart to feel and understand,
And ever standing by.

His word and will are law to me ;
He orders, I obey :
I would not if I could be free
From his benignant sway.

He calls me from the dearest place
At early dawn of day,
And bids me in some narrow space
In weary labour stay.

In pleasure oft how stern his power,
In love, or feast, or song,
His vigorous word cuts short the hour
Which fain I would prolong.

In grief his cheering voice I hear :
Be strong in hope and trust ;
Come, labour on, 'twill soon appear
You can because you must.

He gives me peace in midst of strife,
And health along with care ;
For all the hardest work of life
He prompts to do and dare.

I follow him, all life for me
Takes on new worth and beauty ;
His very bonds make my heart free,
His noble name is—DUTY.

From the Dutch of De Genestet.

W. E. Mellone.

Warrenpoint.

PUBLIC-HOUSE REFORM.

Lord Lamington has again presented in the House of Lords his Bill for the improvement of public-houses. In the memorandum it is stated that at the present time the public-house is, in many cases, merely a place to drink in. The Bill does not propose to take away any of the powers for the police supervision of public-houses. Under section 1 of the Bill provision is made for the improvenmet of licensed premises. It is laid down that in exercising powers with respect to granting permission for structural alterations upon or extensions to licensed premises the Licensing Justices shall not do so in such a manner as to restrict the provision of accommodation for the supply of food or light refreshments ; the making of such premises more open, airy, commodious, or comfortable ; the enlargement or improvement of the sanitary accommodation ; the substitution of the provision of chairs and tables, either wholly or partly, in lieu of existing bar accommodation ; the provision of games (other than unlawful games), newspapers, music or gardens, or any other reasonable recreation. Clause 2 stipulates that where licensed premises are not merely places for the consumption of intoxicating liquors, but contain adequate provision for the supply of food and light refreshments, and are airy, commodious, and comfortable, the Licensing Justices shall, on the application of the holder of the licence, certify to that effect, and any premises so certified shall be exempt from the provisions of Section 120 of the Children Act, 1903.

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